

THE LABOR QUESTION

WHAT PROMINENT NEW YORKERS HAVE TO SAY UPON IT.

The General Expression That Good May Come of the Agitation, Though Business is Injured Now.

(Correspondence of the Richmond Dispatch.)

NEW YORK, May 15, 1886.

Below will be found the opinion of some of the best known and most observant men in New York and Brooklyn concerning the prevalent labor agitation and its results. All are men whose opinion will be listened to with deference and interest. The questions asked them were:

Are the labor troubles a serious menace to the peace of the country?

Has the workingman been benefited by the agitation?

Will the business of the year 1886 be seriously injured?

Do we need a larger standing army?

How are we to deal with Anarchists?

CHARLES A. DANA, editor of the New York Sun: The question is a very large one, young man, but I think we can sum it all up in a few words. The labor troubles are not a danger to the country at large. We do not need a larger standing army. There are no labor troubles now; they have all settled themselves and are over. The business of 1886 is seriously injured. The workingman is not benefited. The workingman is not benefited.

WHAT JAY COULD SAY.

Jay Gould: I have not yet thoroughly examined the effects of the late strike upon the industries of the eastern part of the country, and am therefore unable to speak except in a general way. Business is very seriously injured, and the workingmen are the losers. They cannot improve their condition by means of boycotting and striking. At present the labor organizations have no higher aim than to force their employers to be entangled in contracts, or are at their busiest season, and then seize by the throat and threaten to ruin them if exorbitant concessions are not made. More intelligent and just principles will have to be adopted by the workingmen before they can better their condition. We don't need a bigger standing army. The militia and police can take care of those who do violence.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

The heart of the people is in the right place. They are on the side of justice and equity and opposed to injustice and wrong, no matter whether it be the workingman or the capitalist who does the wrong. And let me tell you that a healthy public sentiment is better than ten standing armies. The interest of our citizens in supporting law and order would be lessened if we kept a uniformed force of professional fighting men to subvert law. We are better off as we are. I don't know whether or not labor has benefited itself by these great strikes. I don't believe that it has done so, though. I believe that it has injured itself. As powder says, workingmen must do justice if they would obtain justice for themselves. When the workingman takes advantage of his employer's difficulties to say to that employer, "You must grant me great concessions, or I will ruin you," he does a very foolish thing and hurts himself more than any one else. I am in sympathy with workingmen and I want to see them better their condition, but I don't like some of the methods adopted, partly because those methods are mistaken and partly because they are unjust.

VICAR-GENERAL KEEGAN, R. C.

I think that ultimate good will result from the labor agitation, although business has been hurt quite seriously. I like the idea of arbitration between labor and capital. Some workingmen undoubtedly are deprived of all that tends to make life sweet. Fourteen hours is too long for any man to work at manual labor; it is a grinding slavery. At the same time I think eight hours too short, and I'm afraid that the Saturday half-holiday system, if adopted, would result in a large number of men, or boys whose mothers are dependent on them for support frequent race-tracks and spend their money if let out on Saturdays. I know several cases of the kind. I don't look upon the labor troubles as a serious menace to the peace of the country. There is no socialism or anarchy among the English-speaking workingmen in this country. I have been talking with many priests on this question and have found some who think we need a larger standing army. I don't think so. Our reliance is on the good sense of the nation, and I am sure that will not fail us.

FATHER THOMAS WAID.

I'm not in a position to speak authoritatively concerning the position of the Roman Catholic Church in America. I see that in Canada it is hostile to the Knights of Labor, if dispatches are correct. In America the Church, as I understand it, has taken no position except that it is a religious body, and wants to see justice done to him. At the same time it does not want to see him do injustice, and I think that some of the strikes have been unjust. Others again seemed to be entirely proper and necessary. We don't need a bigger standing army.

DONALD M'KAY.

senior partner of the banking firm of Vermilye & Co.: The business of 1886 has been seriously injured by the labor troubles, and the workingmen will be the sufferers. The strikes are subsidizing, though, and better times are near at hand. Still, trade has received a severe blow. Anything which interferes with the smooth running of the great machinery of commerce is bound to hurt trade, and that hurts the workingman. A friend of mine, who is in the building business, told me that the year opened with the highest prospect for ever saw for building stone. The strikes have killed the trade for the year. And so it has been in many other trades.

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I think that arbitration is the only way in which differences between capital and labor can be peacefully and satisfactorily adjusted. I believe that the best thought, both among employers and employed, is moving in this direction. Both sides to the controversy will then have a hearing and a better understanding of the questions in issue will be arrived at.

MAYOR WHITNEY, OF BROOKLYN.

The labor troubles have caused great damage to business, and have put off many public works and great enterprises which would have benefited the workingman. We don't need any bigger standing army; public sentiment is our safeguard. Socialists and Anarchists must be roughly dealt with if they don't behave themselves. They are like the little boy who steals your apples. If tufts of grass won't bring him down, harsher measures must be adopted.

COLLECTOR HEDDEN.

of the New York Custom-House: I think that the results of the labor demonstration are rather opening the eyes of the workingmen. They can see now that they are cutting their own throats in some of the strikes they are making. Business has been injured immensely we know, but we don't come in contact with the effects in any very great extent. The cost of foreign goods is coming very soon, but I suppose one would be very soon of the cost of production is greatly increased. No, we don't need any more standing army; it would do harm. As to Anarchists and men of all kinds who do violence, they must be put down, and the workingman who tries to intimidate must also understand that when he strikes he is making himself a lawbreaker. He must try to prevent other men from working in his place. Everybody wants to elevate the laboring-man, but those who make the biggest noise about his rights are his worst enemies. Anarchy and riot hurt the laborer more than anything else.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE COTTON EXCHANGE.

Henry Hentz, president of the Cotton Exchange: Yes, business has been seriously injured, and the workingmen will be the sufferers. The strikes are subsidizing, though, and better times are near at hand. Still, trade has received a severe blow. Anything which interferes with the smooth running of the great machinery of commerce is bound to hurt trade, and that hurts the workingman. A friend of mine, who is in the building business, told me